

## Schools go higher-tech

By JACK HOPKINS  
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Updated technology has been rolling into Scott County schools this month, with 247 new computers installed in nine buildings.

Most of the computers being replaced had been at the schools six years or longer - eons in the tech world.

"These computers were brought to the schools to better equip students with a better quality of technology," said Don Beaven, director of networks for the school district.

Scott County High School was given 22 new laptops and 46 desktops. The students appreciated the update.

"The new computers are really nice. I use my computer at home for gaming only, so it's good to have another computer for other things," said Michael Walker, a junior at Scott County High School.

The General Assembly provided schools statewide with \$50 million in bond funds for an education technology pool. The state's Office of Education Technology found in a 2005 survey of public schools that approximately 70 percent of the computers were outdated and needed to be replaced.

Scott County schools received \$270,000 this school year to purchase new equipment.

"We're so thankful for this fund, because we don't have enough money in our budget to afford something like this," said Julie Holzhausen, technology coordinator at the high school.

In addition to improved technology, the SCHS students will have more computers available to use.

With the old computers, there was a 17:1 ratio of students to computers. That improves to an 8:1 ratio of students to computers with the new laptops and desktops.

School administrators hope to eventually get a laptop in the hands of every student. For now, some students are happy just to have a new one in front of them.

"I think these computers are a lot better than the old ones, because the sound was bad (on the old computers), and it would log you off all the time," said Lyndsey Gates, an SCHS junior.

The new computers came equipped with the new Microsoft Vista operating system, but were changed back to an older system.

"We purchased the computers with Vista, but we had to re-image the computers with Microsoft XP Professional to make sure they worked with our current software. We plan on incorporating Vista soon," Beaven said.

Beaven has been assisted by Sheila Setser, senior engineer with Scott County schools, in organizing the project and getting the computers set up for students to use.

"This was very much needed for education, with our goal being to provide the most efficient (technology) environment for these students," she said.

The new computers have a prolific amount of software, she added.

"These computers provide movie and sound clips as well as helping with presentations. It's a great world of difference for us," said Michelle Nichols, SCHS marketing teacher.



*News-Graphic/Jack Hopkins  
Junior Adam Stewart and other students at Scott County High School try out the school's new Optiplex 745 desktops. The school system has installed nearly 250 new computers.*